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Question Time: Punishment for Cecil the lion's killer?

Should Walter Palmer be extradited to Zimbabwe?

**By Rob Burgess
Tribune night editor**

[Editor's note: To participate in future queries, keep an eye on our Twitter and Facebook accounts.]

The online world erupted in disgust when it was revealed a Minnesota man had killed a 13-year-old African lion named Cecil on July 1 in Hwange National Park in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe.

“Zimbabwe announced Friday that it would seek the extradition of American dentist Walter Palmer to hold him ‘accountable’ for killing a famous lion, Cecil,” reported CBS News on Friday. “Zimbabwean environment minister Oppah Muchinguri said Palmer was accused of financing an illegal hunt to kill Cecil. ... Backlash from the hunting trip has shut down Palmer's practice in Minnesota and U.S. law enforcement is trying to reach him. ... Palmer is now in seclusion. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is investigating the case, said it can't reach him. ... Big game hunting group Safari Club International

has suspended Palmer's membership. Police in his home town in Minnesota said they were keeping a very close eye on his neighborhood to ensure the safety of all residents there."

So, we wanted to know: "Do you support this? Why? If not, what punishment, if any, should he face?"

Your answers

"How about a fine large with all money to go to support and replenish the lion species and habitat. Then, a lifetime ban on hunting worldwide and become an advocate for animal rights. This was done 'for sport hunting.' Which is neither a sport or hunting. I'm for eating what you hunt and thinning the herd, but this was wrong at the highest level." — **Jeff Douglass**

"Noooooooooo. It's an animal. Get your minds on something important. How about all the children in Africa without a home or food?" — **Peggy Stipes**

"What he did was wrong. He baited the lion so he would leave the park, shot him with an arrow in which he didn't die and suffers for way too long, then skinned and beheaded the lion. Then when he realized it was a collared lion he tried to destroy the collar. What he did was cruel. Why do humans feel the need to kill something and

mount their head on a wall? Hunt to eat is one thing but trophy hunting is cruel.” — **Helen Perry**

Our answers

“Everything about this situation is bad. Walter Palmer paid for a hunt he supposedly thought was legitimate and now he’s killed a country’s favorite lion. Does Palmer deserve to be prosecuted? It depends on the evidence. If he thought everything was on the up and up, then I can’t see him being tried for anything, but if he knew that the lion was lured out of the animal sanctuary, then he should own up for that. The reach of social media has taken this story to a level beyond what could ever have been possible before the Internet. Palmer is suffering the consequences of people’s outrage. He may be the most hated man in America right now and I feel bad for him. That doesn’t mean I agree with hunting big game for sport. I think if you’re going to kill something, you should eat it, not just cut its head off so you can hang it on the wall.” — **Jill Bond**

“Do we have an extradition treaty with them? If so, have at it. I’m not inclined to feel much sympathy for people paying vast amounts of money to be guided around and kill a rare animal whose numbers have dropped by more than half since 1980.” — **Pedro Velazco**

“Illegal or not, I don’t know how someone in 2015 could travel to another continent just to murder a member of a species well on the way to extinction. These types of hunts are sick, and anyone who wants to call this a sport is deluding themselves. (And for everyone saying we shouldn’t focus on this, but instead focus on some other important issue, you do know humans are capable of being upset about more than one thing at time, right?) Having said that, I think this guy is taking the heat for a lot of other people who haven’t been held accountable. This is what happens when pent up anger simmers too long. The next person to transgress gets clobbered while many others who did exact same thing get away clean. I’m all for extraditing this clown, but even if that never happens I’m guessing his life is ruined forever. Not as bad as what happened to Cecil, obviously, but ruined nonetheless.” — **Rob Burgess**

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